

News Release



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Keeping State Parks Open

State Parks to Begin Annual Pass Price Increase As Part of July 1st Fee Hike

SACRAMENTO -- California State Parks announced today that as part of its effort to offset budget reductions, keep parks open and put the State back on a sound financial foundation, the price of Annual Passes will begin increasing in graduated amounts as of April 15, 2004. This increase is part of the fee increase announced by State Parks last December.

Last December, State Parks announced that in the midst of the State's continuing budget crisis, nearly all park fees would be raised beginning July 1, 2004. The purpose of the increase is to offset a \$15 million dollar reduction in the Department's budget that will take effect on July 1, the beginning of the 2004/05 fiscal year. If fees were not increased to offset that reduction, it is estimated that more than 100 State Parks would have to be closed for lack of funding.

This graduated increase in the price of the Annual Pass does not push the cost higher than the \$125 price that was announced last December. The intent is that a graduated increase will help insure that the added revenue needed for next year is collected for use next year. Here's the explanation. The passes are valid for 12 months from the date purchased. If people waited to June 30, the day before the \$125 price goes into affect, all revenue for the next 12 months would be at the lower price, meaning there would be a shortfall in the amount needed to offset the \$15 million budget reduction. Under the graduated system, many will still buy quickly to get a lower rate, but the graduated schedule is expected to capture enough to prevent a shortfall.

The schedule for the graduated increase is as follows:

Beginning April 15, 2004, passes will be sold at \$110 each.
Beginning May 1, 2004, passes will be sold at \$115 each.
Beginning June 1, 2004, passes will be sold at \$120 each.
Beginning July 1, 2004, passes will be sold at the full amount of \$125 each.

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